

THE BELIEVER AND GOD

ROMANS 12:01–02

Introduction

The believer is to be devoted to God. Everything he is and has is to be dedicated to the worship and service of God. Anything less than total devotion is short of God's glory: it is sin. Therefore, when discussing the believer's relationship to God, Scripture is strong in its exhortation. Without equivocation, Scripture urges total devotion.

- I. Give your devotion, your energy, your thoughts to God (v. 1).
- II. Present your bodies to God (v. 1).
- III. Do not be conformed to this world (v. 2).
- IV. Be cleansed, transformed (v. 2).

I. *Romans 12:01 Dedication and Commitment*

Devotion is strongly urged. The word "therefore" launches a new subject for discussion. It connects what is about to be said to what has been said. What has been said is this:

=> The world desperately needs to get right with God (Rom. 1:18-3:20).

=> The way for the world to get right with God is now clearly revealed through God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The way is *justification*: believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and having God *count* one's faith as righteousness (Rom.3:21-5:21).

=> The believer in Christ can now be *sanctified*, that is, set apart to God and set free from sin to life eternal by the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:1-8:39).

=> The believer or the church, not Israel, is now God's choice to carry the gospel of His Son to the whole world (Rom. 9:1-11:36).

This is the glorious message of how much God loves us and of what God has done for us. This is what is meant by "in view of God's mercy." The mercy of God is overflowing; it is beyond anything any person could ever desire. Just think about what God has done for us. God has...

- met our desperate need to get right with Him.
- provided the power to be set free from the terrible bondages of this life and to live eternally.
- given the most glorious purpose to life: that of proclaiming the news of God's Son, of how to be set free from sin and death and to live eternally.

Therefore, in light of God's mercy, of all this that God has done for us, we must devote ourselves to God. We must dedicate and commit ourselves to Him.

Note the words “I urge you” (*parakaleo*) — implore you, beseech you, beg you — devote yourselves to God. Note a significant point: what is about to be said is not being said to the world, that is, to the lost. It is being directed to *brothers in Christ*: “Therefore, I urge you, brothers.” Devotion to God is strongly urged. The believer is to do the things covered in the next three points of the outline.

II. *Romans 12:01 Dedication of Body*

The believer is to present his body to God. The importance of the human body cannot be overstated. The one thing upon earth that is abused more than anything else is man’s body. Man abuses, neglects, and ignores his body...

- by overeating
- by becoming inactive
- by being too active
- by cursing, fighting and killing
- by partaking of harmful substances
- by caring for the external abusing the internal
- by getting too much or too little rest

The list could go on and on, but just the mention of these few *sins* clearly strikes the point home. If there is an exhortation in Scripture that must be heeded by Christian believers, it is the exhortation of these two verses.

1. The believer is to present his body as a *living sacrifice* to God. Note three facts.
 - a. God demands the *believer’s body*. God is not only interested in man’s spirit; He is vitally interested in man’s body. His interest could not be any stronger nor made any clearer. This is clearly seen by contrasting the world’s view of the body with God’s view (see *Body*, Rom. 12:1).
 - b. The believer is to present his body *to God*. The dedication...
 - is not to be made to *self*, living as one wishes; doing one’s own thing.
 - is not to be made to *others*: living for family, wife, husband, child, parent, mistress, companion, sexual partner or employer.
 - is not to be to *something else*: houses, lands, property, money, cars, possessions, profession, recreation, retirement, luxury, power, recognition, fame.

The body is to be offered to God and to God alone. God demands the body, demands that it be presented to Him. God wants the body to be sacrificially living for Him.

- c. The believer is to present his body to God as a *living sacrifice*. Note the believer’s offering of his body is to be *sacrificial*. This is the picture of Old Testament believers taking animals and offering them to God as sacrifices. The believer is to make the same kind of sacrificial offering to God, but note the profound difference.

The believer's offering is not to be the sacrifice of an animal's flesh and blood. The offering and sacrifice of the believer is to be his body: he is to offer his body as a *living sacrifice*. A living sacrifice means at least four things.

- A *living sacrifice* means a constant, continuous sacrifice, not just an occasional dedication of one's body. A person does not sacrifice his body to God today, and then take his body back into his own hands and do his own thing tomorrow. A *living sacrifice* means that a person dedicates his body *to live for God and to keep on living for God*.
- A *living sacrifice* means a sacrifice of a person's body wherever the body is. A particular place is not needed. The sacrifice of the body is a living sacrifice; it can be made while the body is living right where it is. And the offering of a living sacrifice is to be made *right now* while the body is living.
- A *living sacrifice* means that the body sacrifices its own desires and lives for God. The body lives a holy, righteous, pure, clean and moral life for God. The body does not pollute, dirty nor contaminate itself with the sins and corruption's of the world: not the cravings of sinful man; nor the boasting of what he has or does; not the lust of the flesh, nor the lust of eyes. The believer's body is sacrificed for God and dedicated to live as He commands.
- A *living sacrifice* means that the body lives for God by serving God. It means that the body sacrifices and gives up its own ambitions and desires, and it serves God while upon this earth. The body gives itself to the work of proclaiming the love of God and of ministering to a world reeling in desperate needs. The body sacrifices itself to serve God and Him alone. The body is dedicated to God as a living sacrifice.

In summary, the believer is to dedicate his body to God as a living sacrifice in the home, church, school, office, plant, field, restaurant, club, plane, car or bus. No matter where the believer's body is, his body is to be sacrificed for God. Sacrificing to God is not something that is transacted in a church. Sacrificing to God is transacted in every act of the human body. The world, that is, the whole universe, is the sanctuary of God; and the believer's body is the temple of God. Therefore, every act of the believer's body is to be an act of service to God.

1 Cor 6:20 *You were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

2. The reasons why the believer is to present his body to God are twofold.
 - a. The dedication of the body to God is *acceptable* or pleasing (euareston) to God. The word means well-pleasing, approving and extremely satisfying to God. God accepts and joys and rejoices over a body that is dedicated and living for Him.

Thought 1. This is the very thing for which believers should seek: to be acceptable and well-pleasing to God. We should seek to cause Him to joy and to rejoice in our

bodies. Our bodies should be so dedicated — so pure and holy and clean, and so committed and involved in helping people — that God’s heart is just flooded with joy and rejoicing.

Thought 2. Note: the believer’s body is either causing God’s heart to feel pain and hurt or joy and rejoicing.

2 Cor 5:9 *So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*

b. The dedication of the body to God is the believer’s spiritual act of worship.

=> The word “spiritual” (logiken) means rational, intelligent, logical. It is an act of the mind thinking and figuring out what and how to do something.

=> the “act of worship” (latpeian) means worship, service, ministry.

The idea is that the believer is to use his mind in dedicating his body to the service and worship of God. He is to study the Scriptures, and intelligently think about how to best serve God as he walks through life day by day.

Thought 1. Note how this indicates a worship time in God’s Word and in prayer every day. The believer must be constantly seeking to know what is allowed and what is not allowed for his body. The believer’s body must know what it can eat, drink and do; therefore, rational and intelligent study and decisions must be made about what to allow the body to do. (What an enormous difference from the way most of us conduct our lives and treat our bodies in this life!)

ROMANS 12:01 BODY

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship. **Romans 12:01***

The world’s view of the human body differs radically from God’s view. This is clearly seen by contrasting the two views.

1. Some persons treat the body as though it is all that matters in this world. They believe the body — its physical, mental and social development — is what life is all about. Therefore, they declare that man must take care of his body to the ultimate degree, developing and getting the most out of it. The developing process may range all the way from *body-building through weight-lifting to mental apprehension through concentrated study*. Some just view the body — its development, life and contribution to society — as the very purpose for the existence of man, as the very reason lying behind the evolutionary process of man’s being. (Note: this view is most often

held by the humanist, the disciplined and the stoics of society; however, there are *few persons* who hold to a *pure* view of the human body. Most persons cross this view with the next view so as to live as they choose when they choose.)

2. Other persons treat the body as though it matters little. It is reasonably or moderately important, but not of supreme importance. The supreme significance in life is the *spirit of living* and getting the most out of life. What a person does with the body matters little just so he takes reasonable care of it. *What matters is the enjoyment and pleasure of life, the spirit of living*, of really experiencing the most enjoyment possible. The attitude is “care for the body, yes, but be reasonable about its care. The body is not going to last forever, so do not let its care interfere with the enjoyment and pleasure of life. *Eat, drink and be merry* — just do not kill yourself. A few hours or months taken off a person’s life for over-indulging here and there do not matter that much. Do not take the fun out of life by over-stressing the body.” (Note: this view is most often held by the carnal, the undisciplined, and the Epicureans of society. However, remember the statement above: there are few persons who hold to a *pure* view of either position.)
3. God’s view of the human body differs radically from man’s view. God’s view of the body is *higher* and *more supreme* than man’s view. Scripture reveals several significant things about the human body.
 - a. When God created man, He created him in His own image (Gen. 1:27). That image rested in the human body. No matter what the *image* is, or what a person thinks the image is, it rested in the human body. An image is only a shadow. It is like the picture on a stamp: the picture is not the person; it is only an image of the person. However, it is an image, and it is a likeness. Just what is meant by the “image” may be disputed, but the arguments do not matter. Whatever the image is...
 - it was given to man by God.
 - it was a part of man, of his being, of his person, of his body.The point is this: man’s body is of supreme importance to God. God gave the body the stamp of His very own image.
 - b. When God sent His Son into the world, He chose to send Him in a human body.

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*
 - c. When God’s Son was put to death and His body buried, God raised His body up from the grave and took His resurrected body into the spiritual world.

- d. Scripture teaches that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, that the body actually *houses* the presence of God's Spirit.

1 Cor 6:19-20 *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

- e. Scripture teaches that the body has been created to exist eternally and that the body of man will actually be resurrected from the dust of the ground and recreated into a perfect body (1 Cor. 15:1-58; 1 Th. 4:14-18).

- f. Scripture teaches that the body is to be cared for to the ultimate degree, being developed and disciplined to the fullest.

=> The ultimate degree of physical discipline.

Rom 6:13 *Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.*

=> The ultimate degree of mental discipline.

2 Cor 10:5 *We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

=> The ultimate degree of social discipline.

Mat 22:39 *“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’”*

Mat 7:12 *“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”*

- g. Scripture teaches that the body is to enjoy life to the fullest.

John 10:10 *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

In summary, Scripture teaches that the human body is of supreme importance to God; therefore, man should take care of his body as well as is humanly possible. The body does not exist for this life alone; it has a far more supreme purpose than to exist for a few years and then cease to be. The body of man has been created by God to be resurrected and to live eternally.

Rom 12:1 *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. □*

III. **Romans 12:02 Conforming to the World**

The believer is not to be conformed to this world.

1. The word “conform” (sunscematizo) comes from the root word *schema* which means fashion, the outward form, the appearance of a man. It is the appearance of a person that changes from day to day and year to year. A man dresses differently for work than he does for an evening out. A man looks different as a young man than he does as an older man. His schema, his fashion, his outward appearance differs.
2. The word “world” (aion) in the simplest of terms means the world itself and everything in it, for it is all corruptible. The world, including the heavens and earth and all therein, is aging, deteriorating and dying; and it will pass away. The world is not perfect: not in being, order, morality or justice.
3. The believer is not to conform to this world. Now note something: the world, the very fashion and appearance of the world...
 - seems to be lasting, permanent and unending
 - seems to offer the very best of everything: pleasure, enjoyment, happiness, fulfilment, satisfaction, completeness

However, the fashion and appearance of the world is a lie, a mask, a masquerade. Even the very *spirit of the world* has within it the seed of corruption. The seed of corruption is seen in the acts of the world and its nature, in the terrible spirit of...

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| • selfishness | • conflict | • greed | • ignorance |
| • anger | • deterioration | • hatred | • death |
| • bitterness | • sickness | • godlessness | • disease |
| • savagery | • cursing | • division | • pride |
| • war | • disorder | • deceitfulness | • suffering |

Note two significant facts, facts that desperately need to be heeded by the world as well as by believers.

- a. The world itself and everything in it shall pass away.

1 Cor 7:31 *For this world in its present form is passing away.*

2 Cor 4:18 *So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

2 Pet 3:10-14 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. (see vv. 3-14)*

1 John 2:17 *The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

Isa 24:4 *The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the exalted of the earth languish.*

Heb 9:27 *Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*

James 1:10 *But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position, because he will pass away like a wild flower.*

James 4:14 *Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.*

1 Pet 1:24 *For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall."*

1 Chr 29:15 *We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope.*

Job 7:6 *"My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and they come to an end without hope."*

Job 9:25 *"My days are swifter than a runner; they fly away without a glimpse of joy."*

Psa 39:5 *You have made my days a mere hand-breadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath.*

Psa 49:12 *But man, despite his riches, does not endure; he is like the beasts that perish.*

Psa 78:39 *He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return.*

Psa 102:25-26 *In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded.*

Psa 103:14 *For he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.*

Psa 103:15-16 *As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more.*

Isa 2:22 *Stop trusting in man, who has but a breath in his nostrils. Of what account is he?*

Isa 40:6-7 *A voice says, "Cry out." And I said, "What shall I cry?" "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass."*

Isa 64:6 *All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.*

b. The believer is not to conform, that is, fashion himself after the world...

- not to follow the fellowship of the world.

2 Cor 6:17-18 *"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."*

James 4:4 *You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*

Luke 2:34 *Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against."*

- not to follow the fashion, the evil desires and lusts of the world.

1 John 2:15-16 *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world — the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does — comes not from the Father but from the world.*

1 Pet 1:14 *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.*

- not to follow the ways of this world.

Eph 2:2 *In which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*

- not to follow the god of this world, Satan.

2 Cor 4:4 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

- not to follow the leaders of this world.

1 Cor 2:6-8 *We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

- not to follow the false security of the world.

Mat 24:38-39 *"For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."*

1 Th 5:2-3 *For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.*

- not to follow after the deceitful wealth of this world.

Mat 13:22 *"The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful."*

- not to live in pleasure on earth.

James 5:5 *You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.*

- not to follow the crowd of the world.

Exo 23:2 *"Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong."*

IV. Romans 12:02 Be Transformed Inwardly

The believer is to be transformed (metamorphousthe). The Greek root of the word is *morphe*. *Morphe* means the real being of a man. It is the very nature and essence, the inseparable part, the unchanging shape of a man. The man in evening clothes looks different than he does in work clothes, but he is still the same man inwardly. The elderly man is the same man inwardly that he was as a young man.

What the Bible is saying is clearly evident: the believer must undergo a radical change within his inner being in order to escape the world and its doom. The believer must be transformed and changed inwardly. His real self — his very nature, essence, personality, inner being, his inner man — must be changed.

1. How is a man transformed within his inner person? The Bible declares as simply as can be stated, “by the renewing of your mind.” The believer’s mind is to be renewed (anakainosis), which means to be made new, readjusted, changed, turned around, regenerated.
 - a. The mind of man has been affected by sin. It desperately needs to be renewed. The mind is far from perfect. It is *basically worldly*, that is...
 - selfish
 - self-centred
 - self-seeking
 - centred on this world
 - centred on the flesh
 - centred on this life

Scripture is clear about the corruption of man’s mind. The human mind has been tragically corrupted by man’s selfishness and sin.

=> Man’s mind has become futile in his thinking, *vain*, empty and futile in its *imaginations*.

Rom 1:21 *For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.*

=> Man’s mind has become depraved.

Rom 1:28 *Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.*

=> Man’s mind has become unspiritual, carnal and hostile to God.

Rom 8:7 *The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so.*

=> Man’s mind has become blinded by Satan: he cannot see the light of the gospel.

2 Cor 4:4 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

=> Man’s mind has become futile in his thinking, empty.

Eph 4:17 *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

=> Man’s mind has become focused upon earthly things.

Phil 3:18-19 *For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things.*

=> Man’s mind has become alienated from God and an enemy to God.

Col 1:21 *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour.*

=> Man’s mind has become unspiritual, fleshly.

Col 2:18 *Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.*

=> Man's mind has become corrupted, defiled.

Titus 1:15 *To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.*

b. The mind is renewed by the *presence and the image* of Christ in the life of the believer. When a person receives the Lord Jesus Christ as His Lord, the man is *spiritually...*

- born again (Jn. 3:3-8; 1 Pet. 1:23)
- made into a new self or new man (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10)
- made into a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17)
- given the mind of Christ (1 Cor. 2:16; see vv. 9-15)
- changed into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18; see Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:49; Col. 3:10; 1 Jn. 3:2)

What this means is a most wonderful truth, and it is easily seen. When a person receives Jesus Christ into his life, he receives the *mind and the image* of Christ as well. Christ places His mind into the believer's mind; that is, Christ changes the believer's mind to focus upon God. In addition, He stamps His image upon the person. Whereas the believer's mind and image used to be centred upon the world, they are now centred upon spiritual matters. The believer's mind and image are renewed, changed, turned around and regenerated to focus upon God. However, it is critical to remember that only Christ can renew the human mind and image. Only Christ can implant *the mind and image of Christ* within a person. Only Christ can give His thoughts and the spirit to *live out* His thoughts to a person.

c. The believer is to live a transformed life; that is, he is to walk day by day *renewing his mind more and more*. He is to allow the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) to focus his mind more and more upon God and spiritual things.

=> The believer is to love the Lord with all his mind.

Mat 22:37 *Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."*

=> The believer is to keep his mind upon spiritual things, not unspiritual, carnal things.

Rom 8:5-6 *Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.*

=> The believer is to demolish arguments: cast down imaginations and every pretension that interrupts his knowledge of God and to captivate every thought for Christ.

2 Cor 10:3-5 *For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

=> The believer is not to let his mind be led astray.

2 Cor 11:3 *But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

=> The believer is not to gratify the cravings of his sinful nature, his sinful desires and thoughts.

Eph 2:3 *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

=> The believer is not to live as the world lives, in the futility of their thinking.

Eph 4:17 *So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking.*

=> The believer is to be made new in the attitude of his mind.

Eph 4:23 *To be made new in the attitude of your minds.*

=> The believer is to let the mind of Christ be in him by walking humbly before God and men.

Phil 2:5 *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.*

=> The believer is to think only upon the things that are excellent or praiseworthy.

Phil 4:8 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.*

=> The believer is to live by the laws of God which God has put into his mind.

Heb 8:10 *This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*

=> The believer is to arm himself with the same mind as Christ in bearing suffering.

1 Pet 4:1 *Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.*

2. The reason why the believer is to be transformed is extremely significant. The believer must approve (dokimazo) the will of God. The word “approve” means both to *find* and to *follow* God’s will. This is certainly understandable. If a person’s mind is not renewed and focused upon God...

- how can the person ever find or discover or know the will of God?
- how can the person ever follow or obey or do the will of God?

The only conceivable way a person can ever *find* and *follow* God’s will is to focus and keep his mind upon God and upon the things of God.

Note also how the will of God is described. Meditating upon the threefold description stirs a person to crave after God’s will. God’s will is said to be...

- good (agathon): beneficial, rich, bountiful, suitable, moral.
- pleasing (euareston): acceptable, satisfactory, welcomed.
- perfect (teleion): without error or mistake, flawless, complete, absolute, free from any need, short of nothing, completely fulfilled.

In summary, victory over the world is gained by the believer renewing his mind more and more. The believer must focus his mind upon God and the things of God. He must...

- focus His mind upon living and moving and having his being in God.
- learn to concentrate upon God and the things of God.
- mentally practice the presence of God.

Very practically, the believer must do exactly what Scripture says. Note the clarity and life-changing instructions in these passages. What an enormous impact is made upon lives when they actually follow the Word of God in these instructions!

Phil 4:8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

Isa 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you.

Rom 8:6 The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. ■